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**Subject:** Delta Stewardship Council response to 7-8-2010 questions  
**Date:** Friday, July 09, 2010 4:10:45 PM

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All:

Some of our staff attended the Delta Stewardship Council workshop yesterday. Please know that there are many unanswered question and many subgroup meetings, including those related to the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, that will surely lead to more comments from Sacramento County. Nevertheless, we feel it is important to honor the DSC by replying to the workshop questions. Sacramento County Water Resources intends to meet with the Reclamation Districts to ask them these questions. The results of those discussions will be shared when available.

1. *What and where are the most significant short-term and medium-term levee risks in the Delta?*

The levee maintenance districts should be applauded for maintaining the levees systems (after the 1986 flood) to PL84-99 standards those levees have served well these past 20+ years. Much work was prosecuted after the 2006 winter. The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan engineering team is expected to develop a comprehensive review of Project Levees.

Sacramento County Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan 2004 and update later this year serve to inventory and quantify the risk. <http://www.msa2.sacounty.net/dwr/Pages/Reports-DMA.aspx>

2. *How should the state prioritize these risks?*

The US Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA have both established benefit /cost analysis methods that would serve well in analyzing priorities. Consideration of ring levees to protect historic villages (some known as legacy communities), in Sacramento County these include: Locke, Walnut Grove (both sides), Ryde, Courtland, Hood, Isleton.

3. *What are the most effective ways to address the priority levees, given the state's restricted resources? (including but not limited to levee operation, maintenance, and improvements)*

The Levee Subventions Program has served the Delta levee maintenance districts very well and should continue to be well funded. The levee districts should be encouraged to build no regrets projects that will serve the long term vision for the Delta flood protection and ecosystem needs.

4. *What types of flood-related emergency planning activities should be conducted in the Delta and how should they be prioritized?*

Sacramento City and County developed levee breach evacuation maps posted on the Internet at [www.stormready.org](http://www.stormready.org) or the direct link is

<http://www.msa.sacounty.net/waterresources/stormready/default.asp?page=maps>

It is quite appropriate that similar maps be developed for the Delta.

5. *What immediate actions should be taken for high-risk areas?*

Obviously, levees that are in need of immediate repair should be repaired.

The levee maintenance district is the first line of defense as they watch the river stages and consider the effect of seismic activity, patrol the levees, and fight the flood. These procedures should be rehearsed.

The California Standardized Emergency Management System and the National Incident Management System are well understood at the County of Sacramento Agencies. Emergency operations, in general, are prepared and rehearsed but are very dependent upon communication with the levee maintenance districts and local emergency personnel such as volunteer fire fighters who are on the scene. Rehearsal would help to reduce valuable communication lag time.

6. *What agency coordination would best achieve effective emergency planning and implementation?*

Specific flood evacuation exercises under SEMS and NIMS protocol.

7. *Are additional local/regional land use regulations needed to provide adequate levels of protection to people, structures, and ecosystems?*

Land use in flood hazard areas is controlled by the Sacramento County Floodplain Management Ordinance. All communities who participate in the National Flood Insurance Program must have a similar ordinance. This assures some common understood level of public safety in flood prone areas. This should be deemed satisfactory in the rural areas of the Delta.

Now FEMA (Memo 34) calls for certification of levees to 44CFR65.10 standards. This jump in criteria will likely be cost prohibitive for many levee districts. Further, the state and federal funds will likely not be attracted by many of the rural levee districts as they don't protect large urban areas. FEMA is poised to issue updated flood insurance rate maps for Sacramento County later this summer. We anticipate large areas of the Delta being mapped as special flood hazard area (Zone A or AE). There will be tens of thousands of acres affected by this revision, after which no new structures (other than barns or garages) or substantial improvements (such as repair after a major fire) would be allowed unless the building is raised above the flood hazard elevation. It is not being suggested that widespread urban sprawl should be considered in these quaint agricultural areas only that infill and repair should be allowed. Such would require federal legislation that would clarify the National Flood Insurance Program regulations. Otherwise, imagine a picturesque historic delta village with new homes 15 feet higher than their neighbors. Imagine that one may not build an in-laws' cottage or add a room unless it is built on stilts. Regarding the risk of levee failure in the Delta, there are area that are more prone to failure than others but much of the levee system cannot meet the FEMA accreditation standard so all areas will be treated the same.

8. *What local/regional land use incentives might enhance protection from floods?*

To be considered later.

Again, I hope this is helpful. We will surely have other comments on these subjects.

*George H. Booth, PE, CFM*  
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**Delta Stewardship Council**  
**Workgroup Announcement:**  
**Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup**

The Delta Stewardship Council invites the public to participate in the first of a series of workgroup meetings on the topic of **Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals** in support of the development of the Interim Plan.

**Date/Time:** Thursday, July 8, 2010

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Delta Stewardship Council

650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor, Delta Room

Sacramento, CA 95814

*(Attendees must pass through federal security. Please be prepared to show photo ID. Cameras, including cell phones or laptop computers with cameras, are not allowed in the building.)*

**Charge:**

The Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup will generate input for the Delta Plan that will support state policy and Delta Plan objectives to:

- a) "Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and investments in flood protection [Water Code Sections 85020(g) and 85305]
- b) Further the coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place. [Water Code Sections 85020 and 85300]

To provide timely input for the Interim Plan, especially given the requirements of the above Water

Code sections, the first meeting of the Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup will focus on reducing risks. At this session, the workgroup will review materials identified below that were included in the meeting packet for the June 24-25, 2010 Delta Stewardship Council meeting to answer the following questions focused on providing input to the Interim Plan:

9. *What and where are the most significant short-term and medium-term levee risks in the Delta?*
10. *How should the state prioritize these risks?*
11. *What are the most effective ways to address the priority levees, given the state's restricted resources? (including but not limited to levee operation, maintenance, and improvements)*
12. *What types of flood-related emergency planning activities should be conducted in the Delta and how should they be prioritized?*
13. *What immediate actions should be taken for high-risk areas?*
14. *What agency coordination would best achieve effective emergency planning and implementation?*
15. *Are additional local/regional land use regulations needed to provide adequate levels of protection to people, structures, and ecosystems?*
16. *What local/regional land use incentives might enhance protection from floods?*

Written responses to any of the eight questions identified in the charge for the July 8 meeting of the Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup are welcome and will be incorporated into planning for the July 24-25 Council meeting as follows:

- Written responses will be accepted by Council Staff at the Workgroup meeting on July 8
- Written responses received by Council Staff not later than July 9 at 5 p.m. will be provided to Council members as part of their briefing materials for the July 23-24 Council meeting
- Written responses received after July 9 will be provided to Council members at the July 24-25 Council meeting

Written responses may be submitted via email to the following address:

[interimplan@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:interimplan@deltacouncil.ca.gov)

All written responses will be posted in electronic format on the Council web page.

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